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The Conference on Uniform State Laws.
The annual conference of the State Commissioners on Uniform Laws began in Washington yesterday. Such commissioners have been appointed by forty-four States, two Territories, the District of Columbia, and the Government of the Philippine Islands. The purpose of the conference is to devise and formulate uniform statutes for adoption by the several States and Territories relative to subjects in regard to which it is generally agreed that uniformity is desirable, but concerning which the Federal Government has no power to legislate or in reference to which Federal legislation is objectionable. Back of the whole movement, of course, there always stands the question as to what are the proper subjects for legislative uniformity and what are not.

Among the addresses delivered yesterday was one by Judge ALTON B. PARKER, formerly of the New York Court of Appeals, and there was also one by SETH LOW of this city as president of the National Civic Federation. Mr. Low stated that the National Civic Federation did not pretend to be the originator of the movement, while Judge PARKER frankly claimed that the Commission on Uniform State Laws was conceived by lawyers and brought forth by the American Bar Association. Whatever its origin, it must be conceded that the project has met with general approval throughout the country and that the work of the Commissioners so far as it has gone has been both constructive and useful. It has procured the enactment of the negotiable instruments law, which, as Judge PARKER says, "already adorns the statute books of thirty-six States, two Territories and the District of Columbia." Four other enactments have been recommended to all the States for adoption by the conference during the nineteen years of its existence. These are a warehouse receipts act, a sales act, a bill of lading act, and a stock certificates act. It appears to be desirable that the laws of all the States should be uniform upon the subjects to which these proposed statutes relate.

When we go further, however, and inquire what additional matters should be brought within the scope of uniformity some divergence of opinion may be expected. As Judge PARKER well says: "There is danger in pressing uniformity to extreme lengths. There are diversities of climate, of production, of tradition, of heredity, of population, of pursuits, among the people of our several Commonwealths which should be generally respected." Both Judge PARKER and Mr. Low appear to agree in thinking that the laws of negligence should be changed so as to substitute workmen's compensation everywhere for the liability of employers. Mr. Low asserts that this change has been made in every country of Europe as a result of modern industrial conditions. In England the statute on this subject provides compensation for the injured workman during disability equivalent to 50 per cent. of his wages, and in case of death or total disability a sum equivalent to his wages for four years. "Surely," says Judge PARKER, "this country ought not to lag behind these enlightened nations (meaning Germany and England) in righting what is now the most monstrous injustice of the age." We do not quite understand what Judge PARKER means by "the most monstrous injustice of the age." Surely the heavy verdicts which servants are constantly recovering against masters in this country for personal injuries received in the course of employment do not indicate that our workmen are suffering any great injustice by reason of the manner in which the law of negligence is now administered by the courts. It may be that Judge PARKER means that the monstrous injustice is suffered by their employers. We are by no means sure that organized labor would be content with the measure of compensation provided in the English and German statutes.

Mr. Low is more specific than Judge PARKER in regard to the subjects upon which he deems uniform legislation desirable. His list includes railway regulation, corporation regulation, workmen's compensation, pure food, pure drugs, good roads, vital statistics and insurance. We do not feel certain about his corporation regulation. If the conference attacks this subject it will probably have nothing else to do for a number of years; and we fear that a corporation law upon which all the States are willing to agree will be a bad law. At all events there is no prospect of a satisfactory uniform statute on this subject as long as some of the States boastfully offer inducements to the inhabitants of other States to organize corporations under their favoring statutes. The topographical and physical conditions differ so greatly in the different States that a uniform good roads law is also of doubtful expediency. A uniform law, however, relating to pure food and pure drugs would be a good thing.

The objects of the Conference on Uniform State Legislation are so worthy that every one must wish it success in its labors. It is greatly to be hoped, however, that the increased public attention which its work is now receiving will not induce the Commissioners to abandon the conservative procedure which has characterized their action in the past, and above all that doctrinaire notions will never be allowed to prevail in their deliberations.

The Third Term.
The rumor that Governor HUGHES will not be a candidate again, which the Tribune revives in its news columns, is too familiar to excite much surprise. At this time in the political year the Governor has twice before declared against a gubernatorial nomination and nevertheless accepted when a Saratoga convention offered it. In 1906 and 1908 the Governor's decision was quite as fixed as it can be now, yet circumstances altered it, and similar circumstances are not now lacking.

Chief among the circumstances that make for the third term, of course, is the direct primary scheme. Its defeat at Albany this year is confidently predicted by friend and foe alike. Progress the propaganda has made indubitably, but in the opinion of Albany observers not enough progress to overcome the overwhelming majority of last year. But if direct primaries fail this year and HUGHES retires, what is the future of the movement? Who is there to continue the fight, to make the gubernatorial canvass as a direct primary champion? A few earnest young men not without ability, such as the Hon. JOHN LORD O'BRIEN of Buffalo and the Hon. MERWIN K. HART of Oneida, have enlisted in the movement. All over the State a number of citizens of only local prominence have advocated the cause, but shoulders broad enough to wear the Hughes mantle are yet to be discovered.

As for the politicians who have seized upon the direct primary affair as an opportunity to mend or make their fortunes, their motives are too transparent to permit possible deception. They at least will not succeed the Hon. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES; the contrast would be too apparent to all. Not to the Hon. HARVEY D. HINMAN, political heir to the machine of that sturdy old fashioned boss the Hon. GEORGE W. DURN; not to the Hon. DEMOSTHENES DAVENPORT, the lightning rod of the agitation; not to the Hon. WILLIAM R. WADSWORTH of Wadsworth, with his travelling expenses for self-advertisement charged to the cause; not to the Hon. EDGAR THOMAS BRACKETT of Saratoga Springs fame, if he later embarks upon this voyage, for reasons that explained his presence in the Hughes State League; not to these and all the other heroes of the sutler's wagon will the sincere followers of Governor HUGHES look for leadership.

Direct primaries after all has been the Governor's own creation; he made the light possible by enlisting, his popularity rendered it respectable even in defeat. All that it has possessed of an appeal to the respect or the intelligence of the community he put into the affair himself. Can he then quit the thing now? The ship is not exactly sinking, to be sure, but unless the Governor stays aboard what serious chance is there that it will ever make port? To his friends and enemies alike, will not a retirement savor too much of surrender to satisfy so uncompromising a fighter as the Hon. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES? To him first, to all his followers also, will not reasons personal and pecuniary bulk small in contrast with the battle for human liberty now in progress, now hanging on the decision of a single man?

For ourselves we have regarded the fate of direct primaries as inseparably united with the political future of the Hon. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES. The departure of the latter, it seems to us, would remove all possible apprehension of the former. In this case it would appear not that the fortune of CESAR is in the boat but that the future of the craft rests entirely upon CESAR.

Our Most Promising Markets.
The Bureau of Statistics reports that "trade between the United States and Canada has more than doubled in the last ten years." The same can be said of our commerce with the Western Hemisphere as a whole. In 1890 the United States bought from and sold to its neighbors in North America, South America, Central America and the West Indies merchandise valued at \$420,000,000. Complete returns for 1909 are not yet available, but the indications are that its business amounted to about \$875,000,000. Comparison of these figures with those from other trade areas fully supports the argument advanced at various times in THE SUN that the Western Hemisphere is the natural sphere of commercial influence for the United States, that the lines of least commercial resistance for this country run north and south rather than east and west.

Europe is of course our largest market, taking about 70 per cent. of our total exports. Our sales there show an increase of about 25 per cent. in the last ten years. Fully two-thirds of them consist of four special commodities or groups of commodities, breadstuffs, animals and animal products, raw cotton and copper. It is probable that considerably less than one-quarter of American exports to Europe involves any selling effort whatever; certainly a very large part of them is merely the supply of an existing demand. In those articles is little or no commercial resistance, but if our exports were limited to lines in which no selling effort is required, the industries of the country would be seriously if not disastrously affected.

It would be difficult if not impossible to determine just what percentage of our total exports is represented by sales made without selling effort. In comparison with those made in competition and as a result of aggressive trade activity. A rough estimate indicates that about two-thirds of the business is in the former class and about one-third in the latter. A review of the records by geographical divisions, by commodities and by trade volumes points clearly to the conclusion that on a basis of employed trade energy returns from the Western Hemisphere are larger and more satisfactory than from any other field. This is particularly clear in a comparison of sales in South America and sales in Asia. In 1899 exports to Asia, including Japan, were valued at \$53,800,000 and exports to South America at \$37,400,000. Last year's sales to South America lead those to Asia by nearly \$10,000,000. In 1899 sales to China were valued at \$15,225,000 and sales to Argentina at \$11,325,000. During the eleven months of 1909 ended with November, the latest report, sales to China were valued at \$18,800,000 and to Argentina at \$13,700,000.

Efforts to increase trade in the Far East through diplomacy have not been notably successful. Last year's sales to China with its 400,000,000 people were about the same as sales to Brazil with possibly 20,000,000 people. Mexico's 15,000,000 people bought from us last year considerably more than twice as much as did Japan's 50,000,000, and Canada's 7,000,000 bought more than four times as much as China and Japan combined, while the purchases of little Cuba's 2,000,000 equalled those of China and Japan. Given equal transportation facilities and the same effort, diplomatic and commercial, in both regions and there is little short of a certainty that sales in South America would in a few years be several times the sales in the Far East.

The most promising markets for the United States are easily those of the Western Hemisphere.

An Elegy by the Bard of Alamo.
With a certain modest pride we give this letter to the world of letters:
"TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—I send you herewith the latest production of JAMES B. ALAMO, the Bard of Alamo. It was written by the Bard and it was intended for the Bard. It has been read at the dedicatory services of the Wallace statue at Washington. This arrangement could not be carried out, so he requests your paper to publish it."
M. E. FOUNT.
"INDIANAPOLIS, JANUARY 15."

Long faithful to this king of song and his ardent propagandist in the West, we find in this request an honor and a duty. Yet the generous singer gives too much. He forgets his own interests. Some taste and antepast of the sacred poem we will not defraud our readers of; but of the perfect chrysolite we shall take less than half. If Elmore's are angry with us, let them wait until this simple and sublime elegy appears in the master's collected works. We content ourselves with the second and the penultimate stanza:

"A hero, as a gallant knight
Whose fame is handed down,
His sword and pen both gleam alike
From times of world renown.
"As one that strengthened Moses' hand
In that far distant hour,
He too, has shown an ardent hand
And left a lowly sower."

If there is not here a tenderness, a gentle melancholy, something Goldsmithian, some smack of the Dr. JOHNSON of the lines on the death of Mr. ROBERT LEVET, in vain have we given our days and nights to the Bard of Alamo. How poor and pitiful, in comparison, is the affected simplicity of the series of poems called "Rhode Island Bards," written, we are informed, by a professor in Brown University and palmed off under various names as native verses by that expert savior the Providence Journal!

And Indiana lets her Infant Phenomenon the Grand Young Man sputter and shriek and tries to hide the gracious work of her greatest poet!

A Pictorial Public Document.
Why should the State of New York publish a picture of a private fish market in this city at the expense of the taxpayers? Why should the State adorn the same public document with the portraits of seven well known oyster planters? Why should this complaint be bestowed only on oyster planters who are "well known," excluding the smaller fry? Is not there a touch of snobbishness here on the part of Mr. B. FRANK WOOD, the State Superintendent of Marine Fisheries, in whose annual report, just published, we find these extraordinary illustrations? They remind us of the pictures in *Ballo's Pictorial*, an illustrated weekly published in Boston fifty years ago.

The Bureau of Marine Fisheries is a new name for the former shellfisheries department of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission. Eternal change seems to be essential to the contented existence of this branch of the State Government. The forest, fish and game law can never be left in the same form two years in succession. We are always told, as Mr. WOOD now tells us in announcing the change in the name of his bureau, that much that was positively harmful in the former law has been repealed, "as well as provisions which were archaic and useless." There is nothing archaic about one feature of Mr. WOOD's report. It gives a particular firm of fish dealers an advertisement for which they would have had to pay many hundreds of dollars if it had appeared in any popular magazine of equal circulation. This is a development of the New Idea in public documents rather than an archaism.

The report also contains a photographic group entitled "Senate Committee and Health Commission Inspecting Oyster Beds." There is not an oyster bed in sight and most of these officials seem to be inspecting the camera. Doubtless the report will form an agreeable reminder of their arduous public services among their families and friends. We may suggest, however, that it would be in better taste to pay for such pictures out of their own pockets instead of out of the State treasury.

Mr. WOOD also shows us "An Oyster Boat of the First Class" (no second class

oyster boats admitted on any terms); a sloop engaged in "Gathering Natural Growth Oysters," three oystermen "Inspecting Contents of the Dredge," and finally "Seed Oysters from New York Unloading at Puget Sound."

Our enthusiastic Superintendent of Marine Fisheries wants the Legislature to give him a shellfish navy, such as they have in Virginia, to hunt down piratical oystermen on the Great South Bay; and when he gets it doubtless a picture of the fleet will appear in his next annual report. Surely the Empire State should not be behind the Old Dominion in a matter of such transcendental importance.

If pictorial illustrations are desirable in one sort of Government publication, why not in all sorts? The official papers of each Governor might be adorned with his portrait and that of his military secretary in full uniform, together with a view of the Executive Mansion. A photograph of our genial Superintendent of Education in the report of his department would please every teacher in the State who received it, and for two or three years to come at least he might insert pictures of the new education building at Albany in its various stages of progress toward completion. Above all the Legislative Red Book, which is published at the beginning of every session, would present unsurpassable opportunities in the direction indicated. This volume contains lists of all the important officers in the State, and if it were illustrated on the same principle as the report of the Bureau of Marine Fisheries (formerly Oysters) it could be readily doubled in bulk.

We commend WOOD's Oyster Pictorial to the critical consideration of the Hon. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15.—Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, who is in charge of customs, has issued a ruling that the duties on oysters, whether of oyster or other vegetable fibre and India rubber or of which cotton or other vegetable fibre is the chief value, the duties on the best material of chief value, not embroidered by hand or machinery, shall hereafter pay a duty of 10 per cent. ad valorem instead of 60 per cent. ad valorem as heretofore.—Yesterday's SUN.

Is it thus that the underlings of plutocracy trifle with the holiest feelings of the plain people? What is a reduction of 50 per cent. on cotton, vegetable fibre or India rubber suspender to the "one-gallon man"? A paltry seven and a half per cent. at most.

Is the Hon. JOSEPHUS DANIELS' newspaper right in calling the Hon. WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE of Kansas "the brains of the Republican opposition to the Aldrich-Taft-Cannon Republicans"? If it is, then, with all respect for those Sunflower Broodingagian convolutions, the opposition seems somewhat underbrained.

JERSEY FARMS IN DEMAND.
Particularly Those Producing Poultry for the Metropolitan Markets.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—There is more activity in the buying of farm lands in New Jersey by progressive young farmers from the West than was ever recorded. Most of the buyers are from the Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska. The motives of these men are said to be the low prices for good farming land in New Jersey and New York as compared with Western farm lands, and the nearness of the farms of the Eastern States to the large cities. Jersey and New York are said to be the most desirable places for the purchase of farm lands. The buyers are said to be the most progressive young farmers from the West than was ever recorded. Most of the buyers are from the Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska. The motives of these men are said to be the low prices for good farming land in New Jersey and New York as compared with Western farm lands, and the nearness of the farms of the Eastern States to the large cities. 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